

**WASHINGTON (4 December)** – U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.), representing Florida's 9th Congressional District, today issued the following statement after the U.S. Department of Labor reported the U.S. economy continued to lose jobs, keeping unemployment in double digits. The news comes as President Obama is scheduled to head to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark where it is expected that he will further commit the United States to a job killing national energy tax:

"Today's unemployment numbers should continue to serve as a harsh reminder of the challenge our nation faces to create jobs and turn our economy around. It should also serve as a warning for President Obama as he heads to Copenhagen, that our economic future cannot include yet another barrier to recovery in the form of a national energy tax.

"While I recognize the need to protect our environment, the priority must be improving the nation's economic climate and the desperate need for job creation. The "Cap & Trade" proposals in Congress fail to effectively strike that balance and will end up hurting families and small businesses that are desperate for relief. Instead of a heavy handed use of taxes and mandates, Congress should instead incentivize energy efficiency and private investment in renewable energy technologies as part of a comprehensive plan to protect our environment and address our energy needs.

"We simply cannot continue to create an economic environment that stifles job growth and economic opportunity. Instead of taking every opportunity to raise taxes and rob hard working people of what they have earned in an effort to grow the federal government, Congress should pass economic measures that let families and small businesses keep more of what they earn so they can innovate, grow, and create jobs to kick-start our lagging economy."